

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A computerized system for controlling a design process including having a first design sub-process and a second design sub-process, outcomes of one of the first and second design sub-processes being linked to outcomes of the other of the first and second design sub-processes and vice versa by a relationship between one or more first design sub-process variables (A) and one or more second design sub-process variables (B) ~~of the second design sub-process~~, the system comprising:

a user configurable interface between said first and second design sub-processes, said user configurable interface allowing a user of said system to control the said design process by specifying which of the said one or more variables (A,B) are active variables which can have their domains modified by at least one internal process within the sub-process to which the variable belongs and which of the said one or more variables (A,B) are passive variables which have their domains determined within allowable values by the domains of the other variable or variables in the said relationship, and determining a manner of evaluation of the whereby specifying which of the variables are active variables and which are passive variables determines the manner in which said relationship is evaluated and a the dominance of a sub-process in an the overall design process from the specification of which of the variables are active variables and which are passive variables.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A computerized system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the user configurable interface defines a plurality of possible relationships between the first and second design sub-processes and the said user configurable interface comprises has relationship selection means to allow a user to select at least one relationship from the plurality of relationships.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A computerized system as claimed in claim 2 [[1]], wherein the relationship selection means allows a user to select a plurality of relationships.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A computerized system as claimed in claim 2, wherein the said user configurable interface is configured to specify which variables are treated as active and which are treated as passive on the basis of the selected relationship.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A computerized system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the said user configurable interface comprises has goal specification means alternatively or in combination with the above which allows a user to specify a goal or goals of the said design process and wherein the said user configurable interface is configured to specify the said relationship on the basis of the user specified goal or goals.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A computerized system as claimed in claim 1, wherein there is more than one relationship between the first and second design sub-processes.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A computerized system as claimed in claim 1, where the user configurable interface is configured to allow a user to specify two or more relationships and a conditional rule for selecting which of the two or more relationships is used.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): A computerized system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the said relationship comprises either:
one or more rules; or
one or more algorithms; or
a combination of one or more rules and one or more algorithms.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A computerized system as claimed in claim 1, wherein there are more than two sub-processes.

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Claim 10 (Currently Amended): A computerized system as claimed in claim 9, wherein there are relationships between either all or some of the sub-processes.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A computerized system as claimed in claim 9, wherein there are relationships between more than two sub processes.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): A computerized system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the system allows constraints to be placed on a domain of a variable.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): A computerized system as claimed in claim 12, wherein the system allows the constraints to be defined as “hard” constraints which cannot be breached or “soft” constraints which can be breached if other conditions are satisfied.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): A computerized system as claimed in claim 1, further comprising an optimisation engine for optimising the design process using one or more rules to analyse available solutions of the design process.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): A computerized system as claimed in claim 14, wherein the optimisation engine is configured to compare potential solutions to the design process with pre-existing solutions to enable pre-existing solutions to be brought to the attention of a user.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): A computerized system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the said user configurable interface comprises has relationship specification means for specifying the relationship between the sub-processes.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): A method for controlling a design process including having a first design sub-process and a second design sub-process, outcomes of one of the first and second design sub-processes being linked to outcomes of the other of the first and second design sub-processes and vice versa by a relationship between one or more first design sub-

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process variables (A) and one or more second design sub-process variables (B) ~~of the second design sub process, the method system comprising:~~

providing a user configurable interface between the said first and second design sub-processes and configuring the said user configurable interface to control the said design process by specifying which of the said one or more variables (A,B) are active variables which can have their domains modified by at least one internal process within the sub-process to which the variable belongs and which of the said one or more variables (A,B) are passive variables which have their domains determined within allowable values by the domains of the other variable or variables in the said relationship,

determining a whereby specifying which of the variables are active variables and which are passive variables determines the manner of evaluation of the in which said relationship is evaluated and a the dominance of a sub-process in an the overall design process from the specification of which of the variables are active variables and which are passive variables, and storing a result of the determining for use in controlling the design process.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): A method as claimed in claim 17, further comprising specifying the said relationship.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): A method as claimed in claim 18, further comprising specifying the said relationship by selecting at least one relationship from a plurality of possible relationships between the first and second design sub-process.

Claim 20 (Original): A method as claimed in claim 19, comprising specifying which variables are treated as active and which are treated as passive on the basis of the selected relationship.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): A method as claimed in claim 18, comprising specifying the said relationship on the basis of the user specified goal or goals.

Claim 22 (Original): A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein specifying a relationship comprises specifying two or more relationships and a conditional rule for selecting which of the two or more relationships is used.

Claim 23 (Original): A method as claimed in claim 17, further comprising placing constraints on the domain of at least one variable.

Claim 24 (Original): A method as claimed in claim 23, further comprising defining the constraints as a “hard” constraint which cannot be breached or “soft” constraint which can be breached if other conditions are satisfied.

Claim 25 (Original): A method as claimed in claim 17, further comprising optimising the design process using one or more rules to analyse available solutions of the design process.

Claim 26 (Original): A method as claimed in claim 25, further comprising comparing potential solutions to the design process with pre-existing solutions to enable pre-existing solutions to be brought to the attention of a user.

Claim 27 (New): A computer-readable medium on which computer-executable instructions for method for controlling a design process are encoded, the design process including a first design sub-process and a second design sub-process, outcomes of one of the first and second design sub-processes being linked to outcomes of the other of the first and second design sub-processes and vice versa by a relationship between one or more first design sub-process variables (A) and one or more second design sub-process variables (B), wherein the method comprises:

providing a user configurable interface between the first and second design sub-processes and configuring the user configurable interface to control the design process by specifying which of the one or more variables (A,B) are active variables which can have their domains modified by at least one process within the sub-process to which the variable belongs and which of the one

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or more variables (A,B) are passive variables which have their domains determined within allowable values by the domains of the other variable or variables in the ~~said~~ relationship,

determining a manner of evaluation of the relationship and a dominance of a sub-process in an overall design process from the specification of which of the variables are active variables and which are passive variables, and

storing a result of the determining for use in controlling the design process.